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GENUINE COPY
OF A
LETTER

FROM A
Merchant in STOCKHOLM,
TO HIS
Correspondent in LONDON.

Containing an Impartial Account of
Doctor *Alexander Blackwell*,
HIS
PLOT, TRIAL, CHARACTER, and BEHA-
VIOUR, both under Examination, and at the
Place of Execution.

TOGETHER
With the COPY of a PAPER deliver'd
to a Friend upon the Scaffold.

L O N D O N :

Printed for H. CARPENTER, in *Fleetstreet*.

[Price Six-pence.]

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**Genuine COPY
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Stockholm, August 20, O. S.

S I R,



IN yours of the 5th ult. O. S. by the *Jean of London*, you was pleased to express a Desire of being informed of the Case of Dr. *Blackwell*, which has made a great deal of Noise both here and all over *Europe*. At that Time the Publick knew very little of what was laid to his Charge, as the most extreme Tortures had not been able to squeeze the least Confession from that unhappy Gentleman; so that if I had answered that

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Part

Part of your Letter at the Time I sent you the Invoice of the Goods shipped on your Account, I could only have entertained you with wild Conjectures, formed according to the Humour of those who made them; therefore I delay'd gratifying your Curiosity till the Catastrophe of the Affair, expecting at that Time the Publick might have been let into the true Secret of that dark and extraordinary Transaction: But in this we are in some Measure disappointed; for either the Nature of the Case itself will not permit it to be made publick, or the Policy of State requires that it should be kept a profound Secret from the Body of the People; and therefore this famous Trial has not (as is customary on like Occasions) been published by Authority. But notwithstanding we are thus kept ignorant of some special Particulars of that Affair, yet there has so much perspired from such as were concerned in the Examination and Trial, as is sufficient to give us a general Notion of the whole, of which I shall briefly give you the Heads, as impartially as I can.

You are not ignorant, that the Kingdom of *Sweden* is divided into two great Parties; one chiefly governed by the Money and Influence of the *French* King; and another, unhappily for the Nation, much less in Number than the other, who are guided by the true Interest of their Country, at least by such Principles as oblige

oblige them to reject all *French* Pensions, and to oppose every Measure dictated by that Court.

Great Pains have been taken by this last, which, to speak in the *London* Stile, we may call the *Opposition*, to expose the bad Policy of falling in with the dangerous Schemes of *France*, and to bring into Discredit with the People such of this Nation as are supposed Tools to, or secretly in the Interest of the most Christian King. Amongst the Number pointed out by the *Opposition*, as deserving that Character, the famous Count *Tessin* was the most remarkable, and, as the Event has proved, the most powerful.

The Clamour raised against that Nobleman was very great, and Means were found to induce a very considerable Foreign Power to join in the Measures of the Faction, and to insist that this Minister should be dismiss'd from his Employments, on Account of some Transactions of his, pretended to be contrary to the Interest of that Court. Count *Tessin*, as conscious of the Integrity of his Intentions towards his Country, and the Malice as well as Impotency of his Enemies, in a set Speech before the Dyet, desired that his Conduct might be strictly examined into, and that he might have Leave to lay down his Employments. This last Part of his Request was refused, but the first was agreed to, and a secret Committee of

the Dyet appointed for that Purpose; and the Result of their Enquiry was, an Acquittal the most honourable that ever any Subject had.

After the Committee had made such Enquiry as was necessary to acquit the Count, that Nobleman presented a Memorial to the States, importing, that the many Calumnies spread against his Reputation, both here and at Foreign Courts, had obliged him, at the Beginning of the Dyet, to desire that his Conduct might be narrowly canvass'd; and that as he believed the Committee appointed by the Dyet for that Purpose had finished the necessary Examinations, he therefore requested that this Report might be called for, that he might stand or fall by the Judgment of his Country.

Upon reading this Memorial, the Report was called for, which was as favourable to the Count as he could wish. It imported, That the Committee had canvass'd with the utmost Strictness and Impartiality the Conduct of that Lord, in all the great and important Transactions in which his Post engaged him, and found that he had discharged his Trust with the utmost Prudence and Moderation, and discover'd in all his Actions the most upright Behaviour and unfully'd Integrity; and concluded with this remarkable Resolution, That the Committee thought it not only just to acquit him of the many gross and scandalous Calumnies
cast

cast upon him, but that his great Talents were so conspicuous, and the Services rendered his King and Country so eminent, that he deserved the highest Rewards either could bestow.

The Order of Nobles having considered this Report, came to the following Resolution. " That after having canvass'd the Conduct of " Count *Tessin* in the several important Affairs " with which he was intrusted, it appeared to " them, that he has behaved in the most " laudable Manner, and always acted for the " Honour and Welfare of the Kingdom, like " a zealous faithful Subject, and an able Minister." This Resolve being communicated to the other three Orders, who likewise agreed to it, all join'd in an Address to the King, signifying their Approbation of the Count's Conduct, and sent a solemn Deputation of the States of the Kingdom, consisting of Four from the Order of Nobles, Two of the Clergy, Two of the Burgeesses, and Two of the Peasants, to acquaint Count *Tessin* at his House, that the whole Dyet had found him innocent of the evil Designs and other Misdemeanors laid to his Charge.

I have been somewhat particular in the Affair of Count *Tessin*, as it has some Relation to Dr. *Blackwell's* Affair, and gave some Rise to the Prosecution of that unfortunate Physician.

Physician. For as the Affair of the Count was the last Effort of those in the Opposition, and his Disgrace what the Enemies of the *French* Interest built all their Hopes upon, you are not to be surpriz'd that all Means were used by both Parties to influence the Publick to their different Schemes. Those in the Opposition had been industrious in spreading Scandal against the Count and his Friends, and it was his Interest to recriminate upon them, which the Affair of the Doctor gave him a full Opportunity to effect. It was at first only rumour'd that some Plot was hatching against the State, and some Persons were taken into Custody, who were seen to frequent the House of Foreign Powers more than usual. These on their Examination gave the first Hint of Dr. *Blackwell's* being employ'd as an Agent from some Courts Abroad. The Ministry gave some Ear to the Intelligence, as an unusual Resort of the Members of the Opposition to the Doctor's House, afforded room for Suspicion; the Doctor was watch'd, but not arrested, or let into the Secret of his being inform'd against for some Time, till by intercepting some Letters directed to him and his Answers, they were let into some Particulars, which convinc'd them, he was concern'd in some Intrigue of Consequence, but the Nature of it was still a Secret; he was then arrested and brought before the Secret Committee to be examin'd.

The

The Affair at first was treated as a Matter of no Consequence, and but an idle Report; but it was so much the Interest of the *French* Statesmen to cast an Odium upon these in the Opposition, and those Foreign Powers whose Interest it was to change the present State Maxims of *Sweden*, that it soon became a serious Matter, and the Publick was impress'd with a Notion that this Plot was big with the Ruin of the Country, and the utter Subversion of the *Swedish* Constitution, tho' no Person of higher Rank was so much as suspected to be engaged in it than this Physician.

The Secrecy which was observed in managing the Prosecution, left the Managers for the Party an Opportunity to propagate what Rumours they pleas'd, which in the End had all the Effect they desired, and no small Influence in facilitating some very remarkable Resolutions of the Dyet of this Kingdom, and tho' that Turn was serv'd, yet they had gone so far in a Plot, that it was not for their Honour to drop it without making some Sacrifice, and the unhappy *Blackwell* chanced to be the Victim.

When the Doctor was examined by the Secret Committee for the first and second Time, they could gather nothing from his
Answers

Answers that would serve to convict him : Which obliged them to have Recourse to the Torture, which, unhappily for the Country, the Laws of the Constitution permit; he underwent for several Days the Torture of the *Pill* with great Resolution and Constancy of Mind, but upon the Rack he confess'd some Intercourse with Foreign Courts, but what the Particulars of that Intercourse were we are much in the Dark.

The Records of *Chancery* upon which his Sentence is founded, divide the Charge against him into three general Heads : By the first he is charged with a Design to alter the present Constitution and Form of Government, and to render the Crown as absolute as in the late Reigns, from *Gustavus Erixon* to *Charles* the Twelfth : The second, proposing to set aside the present established Succession : Thirdly, procuring, or endeavouring to procure, large Sums of Money, to enable him to execute these Schemes.

The Friends of the present Ministry of *Sweden* exaggerate every Circumstance of this Treason to the highest Degree, and use all their Arts to cast an Odium upon some Courts, whom they suppose to have set the Doctor at work.

They report, That the Method proposed to bring

bring about a Change of Measures, and to alter the Succession and Constitution, was to have poisoned the Prince Successor, and to have corrupted the Senate, by the large Remittances (said to be promised the Doctor) to settle the Succession upon a certain young Prince, and that a certain *German* Territory was to be given to the Heir Apparent of the reigning Family, for their Interest in promoting this new Scheme of Succession.

However, the more judicious and dispassionate Part of the *Swedish* Nation, who refuse to be blind-folded by the Intrigues of a Faction, give but very little Credit to this wild Surmize. They are convinced, that however willing some Powers interested in the Freedom of the Kingdom of *Sweden*, from *French* Influence, might be to promote a Change in our political Measures, yet such Courts could never be so void of Sense, as to entertain any Thoughts of so chimerical a Project as that hinted above; or if they were so sanguine as to believe such a Plan practicable, is it at all probable they would employ so mean an Agent, in an Enterprize of no less Consequence than the total Subversion of the *Swedish* Constitution, as Dr. *Blackwell*, with whom, notwithstanding all the Arts that have been used to come at the perfect Knowledge and Extent of the Plot, there has not yet been discovered any one Person of Rank in the Kingdom to have

C

been

been embarked with him in this Treason? And as this is the Case, one must suppose the Ministry of the suspected Powers to be weaker than so many old Women, to pretend to overturn the Establishment of a powerful Nation, without any other Assistance than that of a petty Doctor of Physick, and a Foreigner too. Supposing the Doctor could have effected the supposed hellish Design of poisoning the Prince Successor, yet his Scheme would be no further advanced, unless he could poison the Majority of the Senate either with Money or Drugs, a Thing very impracticable to imagine in any Country, but much more so in *Sweden*, where the Maxim of governing a State by Corruption is not so much understood, and where no People on Earth have a quicker Sense of Liberty.

Those who enter most impartially into the whole Affair, believe that there really was no more in it, than that a Party was endeavouring to be formed in the Senate against Count *Tessin*, to remove him from the Administration, and by that Means to bring about a Change of Measures, without any Regard either to the Constitution or Succession; and that as Money has been found a powerful Argument to convince the Understanding in dubious Matters, some Remittances were made, or intended to be made, to be applied for that purpose, which by Art, Torture, and a little Management, had been

been wire-drawn into a Plot of a more dangerous Aspect.

There is a third Opinion embraced by some, who form their Judgment upon the Doctor's Character. These suppose him an active, ambitious, meddling Projector, who being settled here, and observing the many Divisions that subsisted in the State, and that the Populace and Generality of the lower Class of People, as in all other popular Governments, complained loudly of their present Governors, from thence rashly concluded, that it was practicable, by corrupting some leading Senators to alter the Face of Things, and that the Disposition of the People in general was such, as that they wanted only a few Leaders to work them into Tools fit for his Purpose. With this Prepossession, they suppose the Doctor had formed a Project, for rooting out the *French* Influence, by such Means as he supposed they gained it, viz. by the Force of Money, and that he had communicated his Thoughts to some under Projectors in foreign Courts, the most likely to assist in such a Scheme; but that none of Weight, either at home or abroad, had favoured, or so much as were made privy to the Design before it was discovered by the Ministry here.

That the Doctor was abundantly pragmatical and conceited of his own Abilities, is certainly true, and is not improbable; but a Man

of that Stamp, who had nothing to lose, might form to himself some such chimerical Enterprize, and proceed to take some Steps towards its Execution, without the Participation of any foreign Power, upon the bare Conjecture that such a Design was their Interest, and that they would support it when they found it in Agitation.

But of all these three Conjectures, I take the second to be the most plausible, and to come nearest the Truth; but as I have given you them all as impartially as I can, I leave you to judge for yourself, what you are to think of this famous Trial and Execution.

Thus far the Plot: It remains now that I say something of the Doctor himself.

He was born at *Aberdeen* in *Scotland*, and the Son of a Shop-keeper, or, as they affect in that Country to call themselves, a Merchant in that City: His Father was of very mean Extraction, and so obscure, that none of the Doctor's Acquaintance ever heard him mention his Relations; nor could I find any in this City, who could trace his Pedigree farther back than his Father, who was a Man of no Letters, had in his younger Days carried a Pack in *England*, and by that Means picked up a little Money, with which he returned home to his own Country, and set up a Shop in

in *Aberdeen*, where he dealt in the *Haberdasher*-way, but chiefly in knit Stockings, for which that City is the most famous in *Europe*. He married the Widow of an *English* Officer, by whom he had several Children, the Eldest of which proves to be this *Alexander*, whom he bred to Letters, having the Opportunity of two Universities in the City, where Education cost but a mere Trifle.

After he had studied Philosophy at that University, his Father sent him to *Leyden*, where he studied Physic under the great Dr. *Borehaave*, and learned the modern Languages. After some Years stay at the University of *Leyden*, he took his Degree of Doctor, and upon his return home stayed some time at the *Hague*, where he got acquainted with a *Swedish* Nobleman in the Retinue of the *Swedish* Ambassador, and contracted such an Intimacy with him, that he made him a Promise of going over to *Sweden* so soon as he had settled his Affairs in *Scotland*, having had some small Matter left him by his Father then dead.

Upon his Return to *Scotland*, he married a Gentleman's Daughter of the Neighbourhood of *Aberdeen*, and purposed settling in that Part of the Kingdom to practise his Profession, in which he had acquired some Reputation: But in less than two Years he found his
Ex-

Expectations that way disappointed, and that he could not subsist by his Practice, which he saw no Probability of encreasing. He therefore left *Scotland*, and came with his Family up to *London*, where he found less Encouragement as a Physician than he had done at *Aberdeen*, and was obliged for Subsistence to serve as Corrector to the Press for one Mr. *Wilkins* a Printer: After some Years spent in that Service, he set up as Printer himself, and continued the Business for several Years, carrying on several large Works, particularly a large Herbal, call'd *Blackwell's Herbal*, in 2 Vols. *Folio*; illustrated with a great Number of Copper-plates of Herbs, Flowers, &c. which were always coloured by his Wife, who is now alive in *London*, and reckon'd a good Hand that Way.

He lived for several Years in good Reputation and Credit as a Printer, and kept a House in the *Strand*, till about the Year 1730 he became a Bankrupt; but whether he compounded with his Creditors, or if he ever obtained his Certificate, I am not certainly informed.

This unhappy Turn in his Affairs, put him upon making a Visit to his Intimate in *Sweden*, where he was received with great Friendship and Politeness, both by the Nobleman himself, and several others to whom he introduced him. Here he again assumed the Character of Doctor, and by

by the Advantage of his Friend's Patronage, was very well received in that Capacity: But the Doctor must turn Projector; he laid a Scheme before his *Swedish* Majesty for draining the Fens and Marshes, which was very well received, and many Thousands employed in prosecuting the same under the Doctor's Direction, for which he had some small Allowance from the King; and it is probably this Scheme succeeding so well, that turned his Head to others of greater Importance, which in the End has proved fatal to him.

He was really a Man of universal Learning, a good natural Genius, but somewhat Flighty, and like most of his Brethren in the Faculty, not a little conceited of his own Importance and Ability. He was facetious in Conversation, and taking him in general might pass for a well-bred accomplish'd Gentleman.

As he never brought his Wife or Family to this Kingdom, I am at a Loss to know what Family he has, but I believe his Wife is alive and resides in *London*.

I have already observ'd that he behav'd with great Resolution under the Agonies of the Torture, but at last was obliged to squeak as much as was thought sufficient to condemn him.

After

After his Sentence he had some Hopes (from what Quarter, or upon what Grounds I know not) of a Reprieve, but that failing, he petition'd his Majesty for a Mitigation of the Sentence, but that likewise was refused and only a small Respite granted him for preparing for Death, which he spent as became a Christian in Exercises of Religion and Devotion.

The Minister *Tolstadius* attended him the Evening before his Execution, to whom it is reported he made a larger Confession than that which had been extorted from him by the Force of the most excruciating Tortures, and that that Minister had carried this Confession to the Chancery; but as nothing is made Publick of this pretended Confession, the Publick believe nothing of it, and think it is improbable that a Minister receiving his Confession on that occasion, with no other View but to enable the Penitent to disburthen his Conscience, would make so bad an Use of it, as to discover what by his Function he is obliged to conceal.

He was executed on *Wednesday* the 9th of *August, N. S.* and was attended to the Place of Execution by the above mention'd Minister *Tolstadius*: He seem'd no ways dejected, but behaved with great Calmness and Decency expressing

expressing neither any Symptoms of Despondency or Despair at his approaching Fate, or any want of a just Sense of the great Debt he was about to pay, but behaved in every Respect as became a Man of rational Courage and a Christian: He bowed to several of his Acquaintance as he pass'd along the Streets, and when he came upon the Scaffold, after viewing the dreadful Apparatus, he ask'd the Executioner if he was not the same Man who some Years ago had beheaded the Chief of the *Dalecarian* Peasants and the Generals, condemn'd by the Dyet, which Question being answer'd in the Affirmative, he desired him to do his Office alertly, and made him a Present. He then address'd himself to those about him and said, " That he was a Stranger who
 " came to seek his Bread in *Sweden*, where
 " he had been received with Tenderness and
 " Respect by all Ranks to whom he was
 " known, that he loved and heartily wish'd
 " well to the Nation in general, and died in
 " Charity with all Mankind," having deliver'd a Paper to a Friend who stood nigh him, he kneel'd down to the Block, but upon the wrong Side of it, which the Executioner telling him of, he answer'd without the least Emotion, that as it was the first Experiment he ever made in that Way, it was not to be wondered at that he should need a little Instruction. Having placed himself as directed, he prayed for some Minutes with great Calm-

ness and Devotion, and having given the Signal to the Executioner, his Head was sever'd from his Body at one Blow.

Thus ended this unfortunate Gentleman, a Life which might have been useful to his Country, had he avoided the Intrigues of a Court, and minded nothing but his Profession. His Death very much affected the Populace present at his Execution, who look'd upon him as a kind of Martyr to the *Swedish* Liberties. This is the Sentiments of the Vulgar, who seldom bear a Good-will to their Superiors, of whom they are always jealous; and the Middling, and even some of the better Sort, speak of him as a Man who had been sacrificed by his Party, and had fallen a Victim to Faction; and all Ranks agree, he deserved a better Fate, had not his Character been sullied by this rash Project for which he suffered.

I have inclosed you a Copy of the Paper mentioned above, which is not allowed to be made publick here. I am,

S I R,

Your most humble Servant.

COPY of a PAPER

DELIVERED BY

Dr. ALEXANDER BLACKWELL,

At the Place of EXECUTION.

Gentlemen Spectators,

I Came into your Country as a Stranger, in order to earn an honest Livelihood in the Way of my Profession, as a Physician. For some Years that I have resided among you, I must acknowledge that I met with a Reception and Encouragement beyond any poor Merit I can boast of, which in Gratitude has begot in me a real and sincere Affection for this Country, and its Inhabitants.

As I met with Civility from all Ranks, I could have no particular Enmity at any Person

in the Kingdom. As my Profession was all I minded, (except so far as I was happily instrumental in draining the Marshes of this Kingdom) I had no Ambition or Capacity for meddling in Court-Affairs, and consequently could have no Plot of supplanting any of the Ministry. As I had never suffered by the Laws of *Sweden*, and as the Constitution nearly resembles that Form under which I have been educated, I could have no Bias upon me to seek a Change in the Constitution of this Country; where, whatever Form it might assume, I could enjoy no greater Liberty than I did before, nor could ever expect to be any thing else but a Physician.

Yet it has been my Misfortune to come under the Suspicion of acting a Part inconsistent with my Character, Ability, or even such Principles as should direct me in the most trifling as well as the most important Concerns of Life, for which I am now about to suffer; but, as I am a dying Man, and in those Circumstances where Falshood is of the utmost bad Consequence, and can avail me in nothing, I declare I never intended, plotted, or contrived any Alteration or Disturbance of the *Swedish* Constitution, nor never received any Encouragement whatsoever on that Head from any Power whatever, as has been falsely surmised.

I die

I die in Charity with all Mankind, and forgive from the bottom of my Heart all those who have injured, oppress'd, or calumniated me in any Shape: And in the same manner expect Forgiveness from all such whom I may any ways have injured, especially of all those who may be any ways scandaliz'd by the ignominious Death which my Folly has brought me to, and that the Reputation of the Innocent may not suffer upon my Account.

Alexander Blackwell.

F I N I S.

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Alexander Blackwell.

F I W I S

